

TWENTY-SEVENTH
ANNUAL REPORT
OF
THE TRUSTEES
OF THE
PERKINS INSTITUTION
AND
MASSACHUSETTS
ASYLUM FOR THE BLIND,
TO THE
CORPORATION.

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REPORT.

Perkins Institution and Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind.

Boston, October 14, 1858.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATION:—

GENTLEMEN, — A recent law requires that all reports which are to be laid before the Legislature shall be made up to the 30th of September of each year, and handed in to the Secretary of State on the 15th of October.

In order to conform to this law, and to a consequent change in your by-laws, the Trustees now submit their Report and the customary Reports of Superintendent and Treasurer, which, however, embrace only a period of three quarters. Hereafter the annual meeting will be held in October, and all the reports made for a full year ending September 30th.

Nothing has occurred since the last Report to break the usual quiet uniformity of the Institution; nor has there been any change which requires special notice.

The accompanying Report of the Treasurer will show the state of the finances; and a general abstract

of the Steward's account will give the principal items of expenditure. The details of these can be easily ascertained by examination of the books.

All the accounts are strictly audited every month by a committee of this board. The Treasurer pays out no money except upon the order of this committee.

The regular income of the Institution from its vested funds is so small, that it is entirely dependent upon the annual grant of \$12,000 from the State. Indeed, the whole regular income, including this grant, though it may with great economy be made to suffice for ordinary and necessary expenses, has been totally inadequate for the heavy outlay occasioned by the changes and improvements in the real estate and buildings.

In order to meet these expenses, and also to carry on the work of printing books and improving the apparatus for instructing the blind, the Trustees have been obliged to encroach upon the capital of the Institution, and to rely upon the liberality of the humane. This reliance has not, thus far, been ill-founded. The Institution has received several legacies; and where no special direction has been given to fund the capital, it has been merged with the common fund, and used in such manner as seemed advisable for the immediate interest of the pupils, or for the advancement of the cause of education of the blind in general. This cause the Trustees have ever had at heart; and it has been their wish to do a full share, to say the very least, in its promotion.

When this Institution was incorporated, a little more than a quarter of a century ago, no steps had

been taken elsewhere in this country towards public provision for the education of the blind; but now, more than a score of similar establishments have sprung up in various parts of the Union, and most of the States have made provision for the instruction of blind children.

It is true, indeed, that this rapid extension of the system is owing mainly to the general sympathy of the people for the blind; but it is equally true, that the existence and multiplication of embossed books gave to that sympathy direct action, by the conviction which they produced of such action being feasible and useful.

The Director, Dr. Howe, has taken the lead in the enterprise of creating a library for the blind. And the Trustees have for many years made very liberal advances from the treasury for the furtherance of the work.

Such a work, however, is too expensive to be carried on solely by any single institution, unless its means are much greater than ours, or unless it is sustained by generous contributions of those whose privilege it is to possess the means of beneficence. To such, this enterprise is commended as a simple and sure way of doing good, for its object is to spread knowledge before those whose life is, as it were, a long night, and to whom a book is a light and a joy.

The supplementary department of the Institution, or the workshop for adults, has been in a satisfactory condition, and paid its own way. The amount of work has been less the past year than in some former ones, owing to general depression in all branches of home manufacture. It has been enough, however,

to give direct and constant employment and means of livelihood to nearly thirty persons here, and indirectly to many others in the country. There are still others who are unemployed; and they will be furnished with employment as fast as the increase of custom will warrant it.

The Trustees have exercised such supervision over the immediate operations of the establishment as they could, by formal and by informal visits; and are happy to express their entire satisfaction with the manner in which the affairs of the Institution have been conducted by the Director.

Signed by

THOMAS G. CARY,
JOSEPH LYMAN,

For the Trustees.

REPORT

OF THE DIRECTOR TO THE TRUSTEES.

Perkins Institution and Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind.

Boston, September 30, 1858.

GENTLEMEN, — I have the honor to report as follows, for the three quarters last past.

The number of blind persons connected with the Institution in January last was reported as 114. Since then 15 have been admitted and 15 have been discharged, leaving the actual number 114. Of these 89 are resident in the household, and 25 are connected with the Work Department.

The general health of the household has been good. There have been no deaths; and only one case of severe illness.

Of those immediately connected with the Institution, fifty-nine are beneficiaries of Massachusetts; the remaining thirty are from the other New England States.

In former years there have always been among our pupils a number from Southern States; this number has grown less, as institutions have spread south-

ward, until last year, when the opening of a State school in South Carolina took away the last beneficiary from the South. This is not to be regretted as far as our Institution is concerned, because there never was any considerable pecuniary profit from beneficiaries, and because the reasons for receiving them from the Southern States no longer exist. Those reasons were, first, that we might have as many pupils as could be taught together with greatest advantage to themselves; and secondly, that blind children who wished to be educated might have the opportunity, though residing in parts of the Union where no schools existed.

For many years the desirable number of pupils was not furnished by Massachusetts and the neighboring States, because knowledge of the system of instructing the blind, and faith in its efficacy, did not enough abound. But this is no longer the case; and, for many years to come, there will doubtless be found in New England a sufficient number of blind children of suitable age and disposition for at least one school.

It is partly in consequence of pupils from the Southern States having been educated at this and other Northern institutions, and having carried home living proof of the value of the instruction, that so many schools for the blind are now springing up in the South. It is pleasant to think of the sympathy and encouragement which these young establishments receive from good men and women; and to indulge hopes of their permanent success, in spite of the difficulties and obstacles which lie in the way of all such enterprises, and which are more numerous

and formidable at the South than at the North. There is now public provision in the United States for the education of a greater number of blind children, in proportion to the population, than in any other country, except, perhaps, some of the Swiss Cantons.

There seems, indeed, to be some danger lest the general good of the cause should be endangered or retarded by ill-directed efforts. Some individuals, who are moved by a desire to do good, but who are ignorant of the real wants of the blind, and some who are moved by a desire of distinction, or by even less worthy motives, may attempt the establishment of schools in places where they are not really needed,—where they cannot flourish, and where their sickly existence tends to prevent the growth of other establishments.

For instance, when a school is established in a State which does not furnish a large number of pupils, it is obviously better for that State, and for the blind themselves, that pupils should be sent from the neighboring States, and that one good school should be well maintained by their joint efforts, rather than have two or three very small and poor ones. Nevertheless, so readily do people respond to any appeal in behalf of the blind, especially to the first appeal, and so easy is it to enlist local prejudice and State pride, that the general interest of the blind is liable to be overlooked, and harm to be done to the cause of education by premature attempts to establish State schools.

It is always an ungracious task to criticise a benevolent enterprise ; and it is very difficult to

guide and direct any public impulse or gush of sympathy, without checking it. The public sympathy for the blind is always ready to manifest itself, and will doubtless continue to flow, in spite of any unwise direction that may be given to it; but it will last all the longer, and will do vastly more for the real and permanent interest of the class, if it be duly enlightened. The task of enlightening it should fall upon those who have knowledge and experience in the matter.

The question of how many institutions shall be provided in these United States for the education of the blind, is certainly an important one; and as it is not yet permanently settled, those who can throw any light upon it should do so. If it is to be settled by mere appeals to sympathy for the sufferers, and to local prejudices, there will be as many schools as are asked for; but if it is settled by wisdom, there will be only as many as are needed.

It is plain that the number of children and youth composing an institution for the blind is not a matter of indifference. It is clear that with a certain number we can derive the greatest advantage, and encounter the least disadvantage, from their association; and that any great departure from this, either one way or the other, is undesirable.

Now what is the most desirable number? My own experience and reflection lead me to think that, in institutions for the blind organized as those of the United States now are, that is, upon the plan of boarding-houses, the number of pupils should not fall much short of fifty, and should not much exceed one hundred.

Before giving reasons for this opinion, I remark : —

First, that I do not think that creating public institutions for the blind, and for some other dependent classes, is the best conceivable mode of discharging our duty to the unfortunate persons composing them ; nor that such establishments are entirely unobjectionable, but that they are probably the best possible in the present state of society. They will doubtless continue to exist as long, if not longer, than any other establishments of public beneficence. They may be considered as objectionable in some respects, but not so much so as institutions of public charity generally ; and they will be maintained in order to prevent greater evils and suffering, which would follow if they were abolished.

Secondly, I do not think that the boarding-school system is the best one that can be devised for carrying out the purposes of such an institution ; though doubtless many years will elapse before any essential change can be introduced in this country.

Thirdly, in balancing considerations, I give to economical ones, or rather to questions of cost, not what I consider their real weight, but the weight which the public inflexibly stamps upon them.

If the number falls much short of fifty, the cost per pupil is very much greater than it would be with a large number. This is too clear to need any explanation. All will see that the smaller the number, the greater the comparative cost.

If the number does not exceed twenty-five or thirty, they cannot be classified and taught to any advantage. Twenty-five, indeed, would form a large class for one teacher. But, first, they are of two

sexes; secondly, they are widely apart as to age and capacity. Now there are many considerations in favor of classification according to sex in schools for the blind, and of entire separation, as well while in school as when out of it, which do not apply to ordinary youth. If these considerations are heeded, as I think they should be, then, with only twenty-five or thirty pupils, we have twelve or fifteen boys, and as many girls, in each class.

But there must be further subdivision according to age and capacity; and this must be greater even than in common schools, because experience shows that few institutions can or do resist the strong appeals that are sometimes made for admission of pupils who are under or over the prescribed age. If the minimum be fixed at eight years, there will be continual applications to make exception in favor of particular cases, some of which can hardly be resisted. How hard, for instance, to say nay to pleading in favor of a blind child of seven, or six, or even five years old, who is an orphan, or is abandoned by his parents, and to whom only two doors are open, — that of the almshouse, and that of the institution!

If the maximum of age be fourteen, or even sixteen, then there come applicants who are older, but who could not be sent earlier, or who, perhaps, have only lately become blind. In both cases the plea for admission generally prevails. It is on account of such cases, and of the desire to have as many pupils, and so do as much good, as possible, that there is such a great variety in the ages of the inmates of American institutions. It ranges from six to twenty, and even in some cases to twenty-four years.

This matter of the best age for the admission of pupils deserves serious consideration, and it is to be hoped that the superintendents of various institutions may give their views upon it in their reports.

Besides the actual diversity of age among the pupils, there is, moreover, too great diversity in mental power, even in very small schools, for it ranges from imbecility to great cleverness, while there is too little diversity of talent and disposition. Thus we shall have two or three clever boys, five or six of ordinary capacity, and three or four stupid ones. Now teachers cannot work to advantage with such numbers.

If, on the other hand, the number be increased two or three fold, and range from forty to one hundred, we lose, of course, some of the affectional advantages of the family circle (which indeed are very great), but we gain very important moral and intellectual ones. We have diversity of talent and disposition, and that contact and conflict of mind with mind which awaken knowledge of self and knowledge of others. There is sufficient range of character for similarity of temper and disposition to beget friendships. The increase of numbers begets spirit and animation; and if the system be good, there arises a wholesome emulation, which greatly promotes the objects of the school. With this greater number, then, we get most of the advantages of congregating the blind together, (which, it must be confessed, are mainly material ones,) and we have the least of the disadvantages. As the number increases, and especially as it exceeds one hundred, we begin to see the evil effects of disregarding too much that natural indication which forbids the congregating together of a

large number of persons subject to a common infirmity. That infirmity, be it what it may, is of course an evil; and it is equally of course that certain undesirable moral results must grow out of it. These results may be small, and easily counteracted in the individual; but by close and long-continued association of individuals, they become intensified and formidable.

The natural and obvious way of lessening such undesirable moral results, in other words, of preventing blindness from affecting the character injuriously, is to surround the child by sound moral influences; that is, to keep him among ordinary and whole people. We depart from this course, and run counter to this natural indication, when we congregate many blind children together for a long period; though we do so purposely, for the sake of certain advantages which we think will more than counterbalance the disadvantages.

Now my thought is, that the number may be so great as to turn the balance, and make the disadvantages preponderate. This begins to show itself when the undesirable peculiarities growing out of the infirmity are intensified by mutual association, and give tone and spirit to the family or community, instead of being diluted and subdued by the healthy tone of the sound members. An institution with two hundred or two hundred and fifty pupils would be in some respects open to even graver objections in this country than in France, where such a one exists. The regulations must conform to the spirit of the country, and no considerations of the wealth or social position of pupils should have weight in their classi-

fication. The beneficiary of the State should not be allowed to feel that his advantages in the institution are any less than those of a pupil whose parents pay for his instruction.

There is another consideration to be borne in mind while discussing this and similar questions, such as what is the best age for admission of pupils, how long shall they remain, and the like; and this consideration is the greater or less opportunity which there may be, under different circumstances, for the inmates to form intimacies which lead to intermarriage. In very small schools there must almost necessarily be very great intimacy. In the very large ones there must be frequent opportunities of acquaintance. The latter, however, present the advantage of being able to have complete separation in all the classes, and even to have the sexes in different buildings. Be this as it may, the experience of all shows that the blind are no wiser in their generation than the children of light; that the natural law which forbids the sin of entailing an infirmity upon posterity is disregarded by them as well as by others, because the self-esteem of each individual whispers that his case is an exceptional one. If he thinks at all about it, he admits that God forbade the sin to everybody, except to him; he sees that the consequences are inevitable to others, but thinks he will contrive to dodge them.

What has been quaintly said of common marriages is still more applicable to those of blind persons, — they usually result from mere propinquity in time and space. We should not, to say the least, favor unduly the propinquity in space. Quite enough of the pupils

will be married, especially the young men, — we may be sure of that; but institutions should offer them no facilities for intermarriage with blind women. If they do, they in so far defeat one indirect purpose of their establishment, which is, or should be, to lessen the number of blind persons in the country; for, surely, blindness is not an essential and inherent defect in the human race, but it is to be regarded as an accidental or an inbred imperfection of the bodily organism, which would become less and less frequent, and perhaps entirely disappear, after persistent obedience, during several generations, of the natural laws which govern that organism; and it is part of the duty of institutions to direct public attention to those laws.

The conclusion from these desultory remarks is, that, taking the population of New England as a basis of calculation, there should be about fifteen institutions for the blind in the United States; and that it is better for the general cause, and cheaper for individual States, to send their blind children to institutions already established, in neighboring States, than to build up new ones.

It was said above, that blindness is to be regarded as an accidental imperfection of the bodily organism. The word *accidental* is used designedly; and I would take this opportunity to qualify slightly an opinion expressed in a former Report, namely, that congenital blindness would probably be unknown among men if they carefully observed all the natural laws of life. Enough is now known of those laws to prevent those multitudinous cases of blindness which are *inbred*, but not enough probably to prevent occasional cases of congenital blindness. They might be

so rare as to be marvels, but still the marvel might now and then occur. This is to be inferred from the fact that blindness does occur even among animals in a natural state, though they may well be supposed to live up to the natural laws of their organism.

Strolling not long ago in the woods, I was struck by the sight of a robin training her young ones to fly. She had got them out of the nest, and on to the ground. As I drew nigh, they all fluttered away except one. The motions of this one were so singular as to fix my attention. As I came nearer, it did not seem to know how to avoid me; and when I put out my hand, it did not shrink away. I took it up, and found it was totally blind. The poor thing seemed whole in other respects, and lived several days; but all efforts to raise it were useless.

This was clearly a case of congenital blindness; for the eyeballs were only rudimentary. Some accidental derangement or disturbance had arrested the progress of development in this part of the organism.

We know that some such causes produce derangement and distortion among plants and the lower animals, and the inference might be, that the liability to such derangements is greater as the organism is more complex, and that they must be most common in man, because he has the most complex organism. But let no such inference seem to lessen the necessity of efforts to eradicate blindness and other infirmities from the race; for it is, to say the least, a doubtful one. As the complexity of the organism increases, so does its importance increase, and the Creator endows it with capacities denied to lower forms. To man especially does he give such great capacity and power,

that the condition of his organism is very much in his own hands. Man alone has self-consciousness; and he alone has the power of greatly modifying and improving his bodily condition.

The first step towards this is the conviction derived from accurate observation, that his actual condition is worse than it need be. If the whole subject is too vast for comprehension at first sight, attention to one branch will make it simple and easy.

Recent authorities state that there are in all Europe 250,000 blind persons, and 211,585 deaf mutes. It is true that the statistics of most of the countries are unreliable, but all are not. In Prussia, for instance, great care seems to have been taken. There the estimate, based upon returns in 1831, gave one blind person to 1,415 inhabitants; in 1834, one to 1,410; in 1837, one to 1,378. The Belgian returns give one blind person to 1,316 inhabitants; other German States, one to 1,400.

Taking the lowest estimate, it may be safely assumed that there are near a half-million mutes and blind in Europe, and a proportional number in this country. This great number of defective members of each generation certainly modifies to some extent the phenomenal condition of the race; but there is no reason to suppose that such modification is necessarily a persistent condition. Naturalists admit that there is a constant tendency in the races of animals to return from deviations caused by disease or accident, towards the natural type. Surely man is not cut off from this beneficent condition. On the contrary, analogy leads to the belief that he may profit most of all by it, and turn it to his own benefit, as he does other natural laws.

It is not unreasonable to suppose that in the human race the tendency to return to the normal type does not imply retrogression, but is only tendency to return to the type which is characteristic of the particular period of its existence as a race; just as the *vis medicatrix naturæ* in the adult does not give tendency to return to the state of health typical of childhood or infancy, but to the state typical of manhood.

Thus in an early stage of civilization, though the deviations from the normal state of bodily health may, for obvious reasons, be more frequent than in the barbarous stage, yet the awakened intellect enables men to avail themselves of the natural law, and bring about return to that type of health which characterizes the civilized stage. Now all analogy warrants the supposition that this latter type must be higher and more perfect than the former.

According to these views, if, as seems probable, insanity, blindness, deafness, and other indications of deviations from the natural type, become more numerous as society seems to advance in civilization, it is because the advance is not real and equal in all parts of man's nature.

In certain early stages of mental culture, the animal nature is apt to be first quickened and intensified, and its sway may for a while be complete; but with further culture its cravings become less and less heeded, as the higher faculties are developed, and their demands begin to be felt. When the fully awakened intellect guides aright the strong religious disposition which pervades man's being, and makes him realize that natural laws are verily God's laws, then he will obey them.

A wise and prudent woman, in the case of her own child, might possibly have prevented that disturbance in the process of development which caused the blindness of the robin, above alluded to. So that, after all, though the fact of animals being born blind may seem to call for some qualification of the remark, that congenital blindness would be unknown in a society where all the natural laws were carefully observed during several generations, the qualification need not be an important one. It remains essentially true, that men may have as many or as few blind, deaf, or idiotic children born to every generation as they will.

The department for supplying work to adults continues in about the same condition as in former years. From twenty-five to thirty persons have been employed most of the time, and \$ 2,187.28 paid to them for their work. As, however, the account of stock will not be made up until December, no accurate statement of the profit or loss for the year can yet be made.

The general financial results have been satisfactory. The best evidence of this is, that no appropriation has been made from the general funds of the Institution to this department since the year 1855 ; and then it was done, not for the current expenses, but to increase the working capital.

The accounts of the Work Department are kept entirely separate, and all stock and materials purchased are paid for from the proceeds of the sales. During the past year, the wages of the workmen, the rent of the store in town, the cost of keeping a horse and wagon, clerk-hire, fire-insurance, and all contin-

gent expenses, have been paid by the shop itself. The clerk-hire is a new charge to the shop, having formerly been paid from the general fund.

Cash is paid for all goods purchased, and, as far as possible, cash payments are required for all goods sold.

The workmen are paid punctually every month. The stock of manufactured articles is not allowed to increase unduly. All excess of the year's production is sold at auction. The same is done with articles that are poorly made, or that have become shop-worn and unsalable. The shop, however, is not responsible for them, but only for what is sold at its own counter.

Upon some occasions, when demand for work was slack, we have made up large lots of cheap mattresses specially for auction, being satisfied if they brought enough to pay the bare cost of materials, and give the workmen just wages enough to live upon.

The men upon these occasions, and indeed generally, manifest a commendable spirit, and co-operate with those who have the direction of the enterprise for its successful result. The degree of success is already considerable; because, if we do not reckon the cost of general supervision, the department is no longer of any pecuniary charge to the institution, except for interest on the capital invested in building the workshop at South Boston, and in purchasing the original stock and machinery.

Every year's experience has enabled us to lessen the cost of carrying on the establishment, while it has given the workmen greater skill. If this continues a little longer, the shop will be able to pay the interest on the capital invested in its stock, and be-

come entirely self-supporting, except for the interest on the cost of the building. Indeed, this could be done now, if we were willing to go back to the old system, and board the workmen and workwomen in common ; because this would be cheaper than board in private houses, and the workmen would therefore require less wages for their support. I should consider such a measure, however, to be a step backward ; to be penny wise and pound foolish ; to be abandoning a policy which is dictated by sound principles, and to be laying the foundations of what would probably in time become an almshouse. But there is little probability of this being done. Whoever may have the direction of this enterprise in future will of course study the principles which underlie the whole matter ; will consider the experiments which we have made ; will note the results of every year's trial, and consult some of the intelligent blind persons who have had knowledge in the matter. The result will doubtless be persistence in a system which is the simplest that has been devised, and which gives to the workman not only daily bread, but freedom to eat it, where, when, and as he chooses, and which trains him up to be a useful member of society, by leading him to live in it, rather than in an asylum.

The number of persons directly employed in the workshop continues the same as in former years. This is not, however, the limit of its usefulness. Several of its former members work in the country, and indirectly are connected with the shop. Many more work entirely for themselves, and do well.

It is not desirable to increase the number of our immediate workmen more than is absolutely neces-

sary. It is not sound policy to encourage pupils to remain in the city after their course of instruction is finished; nor is it good policy to retain here those adults who come from the country to learn a trade. It should be done only in exceptional cases, and as a matter of necessity.

The best thing for a blind youth who has learned a trade in an institution, is to go back at once to the town where he belongs, and try to establish himself there. He should try by every possible means to live there, where the lines have fallen to him; to maintain his place in the general society where he rightfully belongs; and never resort to an asylum of any kind, except in the last stern necessity. If this occurs, he should let not a whit of the fault or responsibility rest with him. Even those few who are to remain as teachers will be all the better for going out a few years, and taking lessons of life in the actual world.

The tendency of the workshop to increase unduly the number of blind persons in one locality is a very important matter, and should be kept constantly in view by those who are building up institutions. It involves moral and material considerations of great importance. Nor are these merely theoretical; for we are beginning already, even in this country, to see the evil consequences of neglecting the principle which underlies the matter; and the end is not yet.

In view of the increasing number of those who have finished their course here, and who must work for a livelihood, I have for some time been anxious to make arrangements for providing work which they can do at home, in the country. In order to effect this, it is necessary that the business at our workshop

should be enlarged. The enlargement, however, must not be brought about by any such appeal to the charitable feeling of the public as would induce them to come and buy; for, besides the strong considerations against such an appeal, the result of it would only be spasmodic, and the benefit temporary. Indeed, the idea, which is too prevalent, that persons who give their custom to the blind at our store must make a little sacrifice, is groundless and hurtful. We believe that, with the advantages which the Institution gives to the blind workmen, they are put nearly upon a level with seeing men. We see that, after long practice, they can do certain simple kinds of work thoroughly and well. We know that the materials of all the goods on sale are honestly what they are stated to be. Knowing these things, we have placed our shop in one of the great thoroughfares of trade, in fair competition with others, and have invited inspection of the goods manufactured.

We might indeed urge people to come and buy, and plead as our motive the strong desire of giving work and support to the blind. This would be at least quite as generous and disinterested as the motive so commonly put forth in advertisements, to wit, the great desire of accommodating the public; but we do not do even this; for, while our motive in selling is to employ the blind, we expect that the motive of the buyer will be to get a good bargain.

It is only by acting on this principle that we have been able to create a steady and reliable business. If it is enlarged in this way, the enlargement will pretty surely be permanent; and we shall thus obviate one difficulty which has been urged as an objec-

tion to our plan, to wit, that the blind may be encouraged at one season with prospect of employment, and left at another to suffer from lack of it.

Practically, there has never been much difficulty on this score, and of late years but very little of it. There are certain kinds of simple work which almost all can do, and for which there is a steady demand at certain seasons, such, for instance, as making door-mats. This constitutes, therefore, a kind of staple; and when orders for mattresses do not come in briskly, the men fall back upon their looms and mat-boards.

Some of the workmen have been entirely dependent upon their wages for more than ten years, and have made a comfortable living; a few have relatives in the country, and go to them a few months in the winter, returning here regularly in the spring.

There are scores and hundreds of blind persons in the country who would be glad of the same opportunity; and the main difficulty in the way of their having it arises from their inability to compete with seeing persons who work for the wholesale dealers. By taking advantage of that law of trade which gives to the retailer so large a share of profit, and allowing all this to the blind workman, our establishment gives means of support to a certain number, which will be greater or less according as our retail business is greater or less. Beyond this we cannot safely go, as will be seen by looking at the practical workings of any branch. For instance, the price which is readily paid by families for reseating cane-bottom chairs, gives a good living profit to a blind man; and most of the work of this kind in the city comes

to our shop. If, however, we should attempt to enlarge the business greatly, and go into the work of seating new chairs, we should come into competition with the wholesale dealer. He gets his work done in the State prisons and other public establishments ; or he carries his frames around the country, leaving a hundred here and a hundred there, to be done in families, at odd hours, in bad weather, perhaps by women and children. The price which he pays will not keep the pot boiling, as these thrifty people know very well ; and they do not rely upon it, but earn it when they cannot earn any more. The blind man, however, must have one steady employment, for he cannot turn his hand to everything.

Next to establishing here a large and permanent business, the most unobjectionable way of meeting his want is one which has before been mentioned in our Reports, and which commends itself to the judgment, as well as to the feelings. It is to establish a fund, the income of which shall be devoted to eking out his earnings. Suppose, for instance, that one thousand dollars were given in trust to this Institution, with directions that the income should be paid monthly to some blind man who had already earned an equal sum. There is many a man in the country who could and would gladly earn every week from one to two dollars, if he could get a third ; but failing this, he must go to the almshouse, where he earns nothing, for, the spur being removed, he becomes an idle pauper.

One thousand dollars invested in this way would keep one man industriously and profitably employed, as long as he could work ; and it would employ oth-

ers after him. Ten thousand would keep eleven or twelve so employed. Such an investment would be living proof of the truth of the proverb, — Help yourself, and Heaven will help you.

In conformity with a custom which, if not abused, is a good one, and which requires of directors of public institutions like ours a yearly account, not only of their doings, but of their thinkings, I have in this Report, as in some former ones, touched upon matters pertaining to the general organization of such establishments. In doing so I have laid much stress upon the necessity of guarding against the evils which are to be apprehended from associating together in too great numbers, and for too long time, persons who labor under a common infirmity. I have also been obliged often to allude to the disadvantages flowing from the infirmity. This may have given offence to morbid sensibility. It may have seemed to render public institutions less attractive in the public eye. But if the principles insisted upon are sound, and the motives in putting them forth are good, there need be no anxiety about the final effect.

It would have been easy to present a different aspect of the case, and to dwell upon the manifest advantages of institutions for the blind, without alluding to their small disadvantages. Looking merely to temporary results, it would have been better to touch no string which would grate upon a sensitive ear, or damp the ardor of a generous public.

It would be pleasant to point out persons so happily constituted that they seem to gather good from an evil tree ; and to become wiser, purer, and better,

in all ways, from becoming blind. It would be easy also to dwell on certain moral and intellectual advantages which seem to grow out of blindness. We must not, however, be guided by the exceptional, but by the common results. Especially we must not forget, in the admiration which the virtues and the excellences of certain persons excite, that blindness, like any other departure from a normal condition, is naturally followed by disadvantages which it is our business to lessen and remedy as much as is possible.

When we think of the docility, the gentleness, the gayety, and other graces of youth, which so often abound among the blind, — of the cheerfulness, the courage, the industry, shown in later life by many, who not only bravely bear their heavy infirmity as though it were no burden at all, but who show active sympathy for every form of suffering in others, — when we think of these things, we must rejoice over them as proofs of the high capacities of our common nature, which can bear blossom and fruit in spite of sterile soil and cruel mutilation; but we must not neglect any of the laws of its culture.

We must remember that the highest and brightest examples for our pupils are those blind persons who, without the advantage of institutions especially adapted to their wants, have shown honesty, energy, talent, and success in various active walks of life, and who have manifested the Christian graces and virtues in all their social and domestic relations. But in order that such examples may not be wanting in future, we must organize and regulate our institutions so as that they shall not foster a clannish spirit, and a dis-

position to monkish seclusion; but will arm their pupils for the battle of life, and inspire them with courage to contend resolutely, but generously, for their share of its duties, its responsibilities, and its blessings.

The details of the establishment, which are important in themselves, but of little public interest, are communicated monthly to the Board, and may be referred to whenever occasion presents.

I take the opportunity, in closing, to express my obligation to those persons who have been associated with me in the direction of the establishment; and who have labored with zeal and fidelity for its welfare. On them more than on all others, the inmates rely for daily comfort, improvement, and happiness.

Respectfully submitted by

S. G. HOWE.

GENERAL ABSTRACT OF THE

Dr. *The Perkins Institution for the Blind in*

For amount paid at sundry dates, on Orders of Auditors, for various disbursements* for expenses, as per account rendered, viz.: —	\$ 13,337.39
For amount invested in Western Railroad, 25 shares, ...	2,456.25
“ interest on Mr. Stover’s mortgage, ...	90.00
“ amount on T. Stover’s note and mortgage, ...	1,500.00
“ “ invested in Western Railroad Bonds, \$4,000.00	
Interest on same, ...	52.00
	4,052.00
Balance to new account, ...	3,618.23

\$ 25,053.87

* These items will be made out and printed at the end of the year.

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 1858.

Account with T. B. WALES, Treasurer.

Cr.

By cash from old account, ...	\$ 2,567.49	
" three quarterly payments of appropriation by State of Massachusetts, ...	9,000.00	
" Amount received from Vermont, for Pupils, \$ 880.00		
" " " " Connecticut, " 2,979.83		
" " " " New Hampshire, " 900.00		
" " " " South Carolina, " 79.00		
" " " " Rhode Island, " 299.38		
		5,138.21
" " " on account of Private Pupils, . . .	750.00	
" " " for Books, Apparatus, &c., sold to Mississippi Inst. for Blind, \$ 125.00		
Louisiana " " 147.00		
Pennsylvania " " 24.74		
District of Columbia, 25.25		
Sundry individuals, as per memorandum, . . . 94.62		
" " " from George Winslow, . . . 23.36		
		439.97
" " " " Dividends on Stocks, 1,158.20		
" " " " William Oliver's estate, 835.00		
" " " " Ex'r of J. Black, Esq., 5,000.00		
" " " " Mrs. Watson's Legacy, 165.00		
		7,158.20
		\$ 25,053.87

Boston, October 12, 1858.

THE undersigned, a Committee appointed to examine the accounts of the Treasurer of the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind, for the year 1858, have attended to that duty, and hereby certify that they find the accounts to be properly vouched and correctly cast, and the balance to be three thousand six hundred eighteen and $\frac{23}{100}$ dollars, say \$3,618.23.

The Treasurer also exhibited to us evidence of the following property belonging to the Institution:—

	9 shares in New England Bank, ...	\$ 900.00
17	“ State Bank, ...	1,020.00
25	“ Tremont Bank, ...	2,500.00
12	“ Columbian Bank, ...	1,200.00
20	“ Boston and Providence Railroad, ...	1,642.50
85	“ Western Railroad, ...	8,218.75
30	“ Boston and Maine Railroad, ...	2,942.00
25	“ Concord Railroad, ...	1,250.00
15	“ Boston and Worcester Railroad, ...	1,155.00
	4 certificates, Western Railroad Bonds, ...	4,000.00
		\$ 24,828.25

NATHANIEL H. EMMONS, }
 JOSEPH N. HOWE, } *Committee.*

TERMS OF ADMISSION.

YOUNG blind persons, of good moral character, can be admitted to the School by paying \$200 *per annum*. This sum covers all expenses, except for clothing; namely, board, washing, medicines, the use of books, musical instruments, &c. The pupils must furnish their own clothing, and pay their own fares to and from the Institution. The friends of the pupils can visit them whenever they choose.

Indigent blind persons, of suitable age and character, belonging to Massachusetts, can be admitted gratuitously, by application to the Governor for a warrant.

The following is a good form, though any other will do:—

“TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR:—

“SIR,—My son, (or daughter, or nephew, or niece, as the case may be,) named A. B., and aged , cannot be instructed in the common schools for want of sight. I am unable to pay for the tuition at the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind, and I request that your Excellency will grant a warrant for free admission.

“Very respectfully, ——— ———.”

The application may be made by any relation or friend, if the parents are dead or absent.

It should be accompanied by a certificate from one or more of the selectmen of the town, or aldermen of the city, in this form:—

“I hereby certify, that, in my opinion, Mr. ——— ——— is not a wealthy person, and that he cannot afford to pay \$200 *per annum* for his child's instruction.

(Signed,) “——— ———.”

There should also be a certificate, signed by some regular physician, in this form:—

"I certify, that, in my opinion, ——— has not sufficient vision to be taught in common schools; and that he is free from epilepsy, and from any contagious disease.

(Signed,) "—————."

These papers should be done up together, and directed to "The Secretary of State, State-House, Boston, Mass."

An obligation will be required from some responsible person, that the pupil shall be removed without expense to the Institution, whenever it may be desirable to discharge him.

The usual period of tuition is from five to seven years.

Indigent blind persons residing in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and South Carolina, by applying as above to the "Commissioners for the Blind," care of the Secretary of State in the respective States, can obtain warrants of free admission.

For further particulars, address Dr. S. G. Howe, Director of the Institution for the Blind, Boston, Mass.

The relations or friends of the blind who may be sent to the Institution are requested to furnish information in answer to the following questions:—

1. What is the age of the applicant?
2. Where was he born?
3. Was he born blind?
4. If not born blind, at what age did he become so?
5. What is the supposed cause of the blindness?
6. Have there been any cases of blindness, or deafness, or insanity, in the family of the applicant, among his brothers and sisters, parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, or cousins?
7. Were his parents or grandparents affected with scrofula, in any form; with consumption; humors, such as salt-rheum; eruptions of any kind; or had they any peculiarity of bodily constitution whatever?
8. Were the parents or the grandparents of the applicant related to each other by blood? If so, in what degree?

OFFICERS OF THE CORPORATION

FOR 1858-59.

PRESIDENT.

EDWARD BROOKS.

VICE-PRESIDENT.

STEPHEN FAIRBANKS.

TREASURER.

THOMAS B. WALES.

SECRETARY.

SAMUEL G. HOWE.

TRUSTEES.

THOMAS G. CARY,
THEOPHILUS P. CHANDLER,
GEORGE B. EMERSON,
STEPHEN FAIRBANKS,*
JOSEPH LYMAN,
SAMUEL MAY,
WILLIAM PERKINS,
BENJAMIN S. ROTCH,*
GEORGE R. RUSSELL,
JAMES STURGIS,
JOSEPH B. THAXTER, JR.,*
WILLIAM D. TICKNOR.*

* Trustees in behalf of the State, appointed January, 1858. The State Trustees for 1859 have not yet been designated by the Governor.



